Motivation and Incentives

The women who attend ISRA are pre-dominantly Sunni and so are the women in Khairabad, whereas Nai Roshni and Ariana are both attending by pre-dominantly Shia women. The Sunni women belong to the more vulnerable social group and seem to be motivated pre-dominantly by an economic incentive.

The women at Ariana are those who may be regarded as 'settled' refugees, that is to say, that they have tried to reconstruct their lives amongst the community in and around Mariabad as opposed to the refugee camps and they perhaps arrived in Quetta before the refugees of Satellite Town. Whereas the ISRA women appear to be from rural economies, the Ariana women appear to be refugees from urban areas.

Whereas each individual woman has her own motives for pursuing education which are difficult to identify and state, it is possible to make some general comments about the motivation of the women at Ariana. Two women at the Ariana literacy class suggested that they were able to attend the class because economic pressures on the refugees had forced the men to relax their control over the women. In fact, the women claimed that both their husbands were unemployed and they themselves were attending classes in the hope that basic literacy skills would enable them to acquire low-level jobs in community projects in the neighbourhood, such as Dr Seema's clinic.

Others at Ariana and at Nai Roshni, wanted to overcome the stigma attached to the notion of being illiterate. At Ariana, one woman was motivated by her husband who was a qualified doctor. Some women had the genuine desire to read and write and believed that education was a means to a better life and it was an opportunity that

they had lost. All the women in all the schools maintained that they were there due to the co-operation of the male members of their families and believed that it was important to have the permission and support of their spouses and fathers.

One possible incentive which could be offered to women who attend literacy classes is some form of healthcare. The refugee women and children find it quite difficult to get medical attention and in the camps, especially Khairabad, chronic ill-health related to the living conditions is a problem. If visits by a mobile health clinic are arranged to fit in with some sessions of adult education by Oxfam, this may encourage women to attend classes.

Whereas many of the teachers work in order to earn a living, most of them seemed to be quite dedicated to their jobs and enjoyed teaching. The teachers at Ariana were quite willing to take on board more relevant social issues, but at ISRA the attitudes are more entrenched. However, if Oxfam offers to all the schools a ready devised curriculum with a definite course content, it is possible to radicalise the adult education projects. Dr Seema's text for health education, seems to offer an initial vehicle for this purpose.

Komakhaye Awliya as Potential Material for an Oxfam-Funded Female Health Education Programme for ISRA, Ariana, Khairabad and Nai Roshni.

It would not be wrong to suggest that the will to get together and learn does exist amongst women as is evident from the above account of various projects. It is possible that women can be motivated further by a properly structured health education curriculum in Persian, applicable to all the schools including Nai Roshni (Persian being the mother-tongue of Mariabad!), which will enable them to become

'better' mothers and at the same time teach them about their own bodies including the possibilities of birth control.

This is exactly what Dr Seema's health education book seems to offer if it is organised into structured sections/and or modules. It is recommended that in the short-term, attempts be made to combine the text with pictorial representations and images or activities in which students can participate so that the learning process is made more interesting. Observation of the adult literacy classes in Ariana revealed a rather rigid teacher-pupil structure, including the conventional seating arrangement which was not very conducive to participatory learning.

The text of the book can be read by those who are literate, but the contents can also be related orally to those who are not. Alternatively, in the light of the total dearth of appropriate materials available for education for adult women, it may be possible to devise a literacy programme around this health education text where students are taught vocabulary, pronouns, verbs, adverbs etc., around concepts of health rather than political ideology as in the literacy books of Sawadi-Jihadi.

This however, is a long-term strategy which may require time and resources, including the relevant expertise, but it is something that Oxfam may want to bear in mind for the near future. Oxfam should also take into account educational materials produced by other NGOs for adult literacy in Pakistan and see if some of this can be translated into Persian. One possible avenue to pursue for appropriate materials is Iranian women's groups in exile who are usually very active. This can then be adapted to suit the needs of Afghan women in Quetta. Particularly important would be literature produced by organisations such as HEAL in Pakistan, which focuses on health education. Also recommended are other educational materials, such as the short story format be explored.

Other Possibilities

The workshop which had been organised by Oxfam with Sister Barbara and Nasra Habib for the teachers in Quetta appeared to have been useful for the teachers from Nai Roshni. However, the Persian speaking teachers from the other schools found it difficult to follow because the work done was around Urdu teaching materials whereas most of them do not know Urdu. The Nai Roshni teachers who benefited from the workshop are unable to use the teaching methods which were explored because they do not have an adult literacy class as such.

The Experiment in International Living in Quetta has a female teacher training outfit for Persian and Pashto speaking schools in the refugee camps. This training programme consists of nine sessions and is run by Fawzia who was quite happy to talk to me about it. However, her training is geared more towards teaching children rather than adults but it is worth contacting her and exploring possibilities of a joint teacher training venture.

It is also important to remember that health education is a field which many agencies are currently exploring and studying. These include UNICEF Pakistan which is attempting to devise a nation-wide health education programme specifically for women. The EC is also attempting to incorporate health education into some of the projects it is funding such as the Baluchistan Water Supply Project and may be willing to fund similar projects elsewhere in Baluchistan. The Christian Relief Society is said to have recently appointed a health education officer in Quetta. Once more, it is recommended that Oxfam try and pioneer a forum whereby the experiences of these different agencies can be shared and exchanged.

Summary of Recommendations

1 Oxfam should use its funding for the women's vocational training centre at ISRA as a leverage to introduce basic literacy skills and health education.

2 The possibility of setting up an experimental income-generating project for women who have skills in khamak embroidery should be explored.

3 Ariana's adult education programme should be given support in terms of appropriate teaching materials for the literacy classes and training for teachers to learn participatory methods of teaching adults.

4 Oxfam should look into other adult literacy programmes/health education run by Pakistani NGOs to see if the materials can be translated into Urdu. EIL in Quetta and HEAL are two possible organisations which come to mind.

5 A separate class for adult women should be set up at Nai Roshni with provision for funding.

6 Attempts should also be made to encourage the Brewery Road School and Khairabad to set-up adult education/literacy classes. The question of having a literacy class for men at Brewery Road also needs to be addressed.

7 Health clinics and medical attention be offered as an incentive for women at Khairabad to attend literacy classes.

8 A health education curriculum be devised on the basis of Dr Seema's *Komakhaye Awliya* and this be incorporated into the adult education programme in addition to the literacy classes. This curriculum can form the basis of a female education programme and could be uniformly introduced to adult education classes in all the schools and would be of relevance to all women.

9 Oxfam take up the challenge to devise a literacy programme for women which teaches them how to read and write by using concepts of health education from *Komakhaye Awliya.*

10 Oxfam to try and set-up a forum whereby other NGOs and development agencies can share and exchange their experiences.

If the above recommendations are taken into account, Oxfam will in effect be doing some groundwork for its work in Afghanistan in the near future.

B EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN OXFAM-FUNDED SCHOOLS IN QUETTTA

Salman Farsi

General Conditions: Out of all the schools visited, Salman Farsi was in the worst physical state. Located on the edge of a small Uzbek refugee camp in Satellite Town, this school consists of three makeshift tents which function as classrooms. One of these tents, serves as a classroom for 40 girls between the age of five and nine. Twenty-nine of them were present when I visited the school. School hours are from 8.00 a.m. to 11 a.m.

The tent was overcrowded and dark, and although the ground was covered with mats, the floor of the tent felt quite damp. Ali Amin of ISRA claimed that he was looking into the possibility of putting up a more permanent structure than the tents.

The Curriculum: The tent was a level one classroom for girls, whereas the boys have three levels - classes one, two and three. Like all the other schools, textbooks published by the Interim Government are used.at Salman Farsi. Children are taught how to recognise the letters of the alphabet, read and write simple words; simple arithmetic.was included in the curriculum. Most of this teaching was done by one of the two male teachers who run the tent school. In addition, the girls are taught how to read the Quran by the resident mulla of the camp.

Access to Education: One of the girls maintained that she had only very recently found out about the existence of the school. She had decided to come and take advantage of what the school had to offer before she became '*kalan*' , that is, reached puberty. There are undoubtedly social and cultural barriers to female education, but it is

quite pointless to encourage girls to come to a school such as Salman Farsi which provides no more than one class in a crowded tent.

Recommendations: Given the appalling conditions of poverty in this camp which is inevitably reflected in the school, it is extremely difficult to make any realistic suggestions or recommendations. If ISRA is willing to invest in improvising the physical structure of the school by providing something more durable and weather resistant than the flimsy tents, Oxfam should consider the provision of funding for an additional teacher so that the girls who are currently in class one can go on to class two.

Khairabad Girls School

General Conditions: The girls' section of the Khairabad School has a separate compound, not very far from the boys' section. Out of the three 'kacha' classrooms, only two were being used. The floor of the third room was extremely damp. School hours were from 8.00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Shortage of Staff: The school has a total of 73 girls in three classes (32 in class one, 26 in class two and 15 in class three). However, Khairabad was short of one female teacher. Secondly, it claimed not to have a 'chowkidar'. The present 'chowkidar' who is required to clean and take care of both the male and female sections of the school was lumbered with the task of having to bring water for the boys' school from a hotel across the railway line. He was thus overworked and as a result could not attend to the girls' section of the school.

The Curriculum: Like all other Afghan schools, the curriculum followed and materials used were those designed by the Interim Government. Subjects taught included Duree, Pashto, Maths, Quranic/Islamic education and embroidery.

Observations and Recommendations: There is no doubt that there is a great deal of resistance to female education, generally speaking, and the school in Khairabad is no exception. However, because the school is located within the confines of the refugee camp which consists mostly of a close-knit Hazara community from Kunduz, access to the school was reported to be easier than it would otherwise be. Inspite of the meagre resources available to the community, the morale of Mulla Majid who is in charge of the project, as well as the female teachers and students was quite high.

One cause of absenteeism in the school was considered to be untreated illnesses. Rabia, the teacher in who is in charge of the female section of the school maintained that it was extremely difficult for the school children to get medical attention. The organisation of regular health visits for this school would undoutedly be a worthwhile thing in itself, but in addition this may also be some form of incentive for parents to send their daughters to school.

It is also suggested that the possibility of making the classroom environment relatively more comfortable be looked into such as the provision of more mats for the floor so the ground feels less damp when the children sit on it, and perhaps provision of some kind of lighting for the classrooms.

The Khairabad school is a very worthwhile project which merits more support since the community is willing to put in a lot of work in terms of building more rooms for the school and running it on a day to day basis. This includes the constant maintenance and repair work on the roof and the walls for which there is no provision in the funding. Particular attention must be paid to the possibility of funding a fourth class for the 15 girls who have made it to class three and who will be forced to discontinue their education if the school lacks the resources for employing another teacher or two.

Thirty-two percent of the students in Khairabad are girls. For a breakdown of statistics by class, see figure 1.

Brewery Road School (Nur School)

General Conditions: The physical condition of the building was much better than Khairabad. Unlike Khairabad, Brewery is blessed with the twin facilities of water and electricity (and hence a request was made for a fan for the hot summer months). Like all the other schools, Brewery suffers from conditions of overcrowding in the classrooms. School hours are from 8.00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Observations and Recommendations: This school differs from the others in that it is the only school which is co-educational. This co-educational status may regarded to be both, its strength and its weakness. Having a mixture of male and female students in the lower age group enables the school to maximize its resources. Out of the total of 51 female students (as opposed to 73 in Khairabad), 33 are in mixed classes (19 in class one, ten in class two and four in class three) and are taught by male teachers. The remaining 18 (eigth in class four, seven in class five, and three in class six) are segragated together into one separate class with a female teacher, who, however, teaches them only some of the subjects. During the break, while the boys go beyond the school compound to play football, the older girls (two of them come to school in heavy chadors), refuse to come out of the classroom. It is also considered inappropriate for them to do so since the male teachers wanted to know if it was possible to arrange for the older girls to learn embroidery during their morning breaks.

Zahida who was the only female teacher in the school, felt quite isolated. Having had a baby recently, she requested that she be allowed to leave school half an hour earlier

A REVIEW OF OXFAM'S SUPPORT TO WOMEN AND GIRL'S EDUCATION IN QUETTA, BALUCHISTAN

This report is divided into two sections, A and B. Whereas A covers the adult vocational training and education programmes, B reviews the current situation in the girls schools. Recommendations, which tend to be both specific and general, are interspersed throughout the report with reference to the particular projects. General recommendations which are relevant to all the projects have also been made.

A) ADULT EDUCATION

Oxfam is currently funding independent adult education and training projects for Afghan refugee women in different areas of Quetta. Two of these projects seem to be well-established, whereas the other two have had problems taking off. It is possible to integrate all the four projects under a single adult education programme with one overall policy for all of them. This would entail support in terms of resources other than funding, particularly a newly devised curriculum in Persian, preferably in the area of health education. The support would also involve producing educational materials and provision of training for teachers. While reviewing the individual projects in their own right, this report has tried to identify the need for a more 'universal' literacy/health education programme and has also attempted to point out how it may be possible to devise one.

ISRA Women's Vocational Training Centre, Satellite Town

This project is aimed at unregistered Afghan refugee women from the camps in and around Satellite Town such as, Ghaosabad, Khairabad and the small Uzbek settlement near the offices of ISRA. The venue for the training which takes place in the mornings, is a 'paka' building in Satellite Town which doubles up as a boys school in the afternoons. Relatively speaking, the building is in excellent condition, with lighting and running water and gas heating for the cold weather. It undoubtedly

than the official time. The male teachers were demoralized for different reasons. Essentially, they were pre-occupied with the fear of losing students to the well-provided, new school which had just been set up in the neighbourhood with German aid. As a result, they requested that Oxfam consider the provision of school furniture, school uniforms and satchels.

In the light of the strict rules of male and female segregation by which Afghan society is governed, it is recommended that Oxfam consider separating the male and female sections of the school. If these were to be organised separately, it is likely that the school would become more accessible to other girls in the area.

Ariana Girls School, Mariabad

General Conditions: This was by far the best amongst all the schools visited. Ariana Girls is located in Mariabad and housed in a 'paka' structure with water and electricity. In addition, it is the only school (with the exception of Nai Roshni) which has the luxury of having furniture and school uniforms. However, one drawback that it shares with the rest of the schools is the problem of overcrowding.

Students and Teachers: Ariana caters for a total of 187 female students (excluding those women who are enrolled for the literacy classes) - 75 in class one a, b, and c, 45 in class two a and b, 35 in class three a and b, 18 in class four and 14 in class five. It was very encouraging to note that from 1990 to 1991, that is, only within one year of the establishment of the school, the total number of students enrolled at Ariana has increased by 44%, from 130 to 187. In order to cope with the large number of students, the school operates in two shifts - a morning shift from 8.30 a.m. to 11.45 a.m. and an afternoon one from 12.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. As a matter of

policy, Ariana tries not to have more than a maximum of 25 students in a class in order to facilitate teaching. Thus the lower grades where the demand is high, are split into streams a, b and c.

Eight part-time teachers are employed - four to cover each of the two shifts. The teachers appeared to be well-trained and motivated, relatively speaking. Ariana provides its staff as well as adult students a full time creche facility.

The teachers had mixed feelings about the high drop out rate in the higher grades of the school, particularly in class four and five. Although they would like to see more students stay on, this would mean more pressure on their meagre resources which are already stretched. Another concern expressed was the inability to offer grade six next year to the 14 girls who were now in class five. The school has maximized to a full capacity, its use of available space within its own compound and has no more room for further expansion. It would not be wrong to attribute the success of this school to Dr Seema's untiring activist work and her resourcefulness.

Nai Roshni School, Mariabad

General Conditions: Based on the premises of a government school in Mariabad, Nai Roshni offers classes in the afternoon from 2.00 to 4.30 p.m. Out of all the schools visited, this was the only Urdu-medium school. Unlike the others which cater for refugees, Nai Roshni is meant to be a resource for the Persian-speaking/Pakistani girls and women of the Hazara community in Mariabad.

The building, a permanent structure, is in reasonable condition an with the exception of two classrooms, the rest have furniture. Nai Roshni caters for a total of 179 girls in six grades and a KG level class. The KG level has 28 students, class one has 20, class two has 40, class three has 25, class four has 18, class five has 18 and class

six has 20. Although there are seven classes in total, Nai Roshni employs only six teachers, which in effect means that the school is short of staff.

Observations: As explained in Section A of this report (see page 8), Nai Roshni is misperceived by the local community as an adult education centre. Nai Roshni offers the standard Pakistani education curriculum with classes in Urdu, Maths, Social Studies, Science, Islamic Studies for the five grades with the addition of English for grade six.

Many of the younger students who attend the afternoon classes work in the mornings, either in the local government-funded craft centre or elsewhere, while some of them help the mothers with housework and childcare. The older girls are those who have missed out on education and are embarrassed to attend a normal school where they would be forced to sit in classes with students a lot younger than them. It was obvious that most of the girls who attend were from socially disadvantaged groups.

Kulsum, who is the headmistress in charge of the school, is reputed to be authoritarian in her approach which results in a very repressive environment in the school.

Some General Comments and Recommendations

It is obvious from the above account of the various education projects that each has its own peculiar strengths and weaknesses, and therefore its own specific problems which need to be addressed separately.

Nevertheless, some concerns of general interest can be discerned from the different projects:

1 It must be clear that in all the schools, the number of girls decreases progressively in the higher grades. In Ariana for example, grade five is left with 14 girls which is a mere 19% of the total number of 75 in grade one.

Oxfam should address the issue of the high drop out rates which occur after class/grade two. It is suggested that this be discussed with the teachers who may be able to recommend ways and means of dealing with it - for example, medical care as a possible incentive in Khairabad. Currently, the schools do not have statistics of student numbers and to start with they should be encouraged to have these so as to be able to monitor the drop out rate in different classes (see some of the sample statistics attached to this report).

The teachers at Ariana maintain that there are many reasons for the high drop out rate, including resistance to female education. Some students are made to observe purdah while others leave in order to get married, some are known to have changed schools and others emigrate abroad or move elsewhere within Pakistan.

2 It must not be forgotten that if many girls are prevented from attending school by family and social pressure, there are also those who are motivated by their fathers and their brothers and those who are self-motivated and are not prevented from acquiring education. It is perhaps such girls who stay on as long as they can and who deserve support.

3 All the schools seem to be expanding rather quickly. This raises the issue of adding on extra classes to the existing ones. Consequently, the school and therefore Oxfam needs to take into account the current running costs of the school plus the cost of adding on another class annually. If no provision is made for the 14 girls in Ariana's grade five to progress to a higher grade, it is unlikely that they will have any other opportunity to further their education.

4 It is recommended that the schools be encouraged to provide either childcare facilities to the female members of staff or alternatively, where it is uneconomical or impossible to have a creche facility, a childcare allowance be given to female teachers. If possible, schools should also take some responsibility to ensure that female teachers have adequate means of transport to commute to and from school. Perhaps a travel allowance can be given to those teachers who have to travel a long way. These incentives can be one way of overcoming the shortage of female teachers which the schools were experiencing.

5 The curriculum taught in most of the schools is that of the Interim Government and generally consists of five core subjects including Duree (Persian), Pashto, Maths, Science, Islamic/Quranic Studies. Some of the schools teach English in the higher grades. This curriculum is not recognised by the Baluchistan Education Board and it does not equip any of the students to pursue higher education in Pakistan. It seems that the underlying assumption that all the schools have made in adopting this curriculum is that at some point in time, the refugees will be returning to Afghanistan and that what is being taught will enable the children to integrate themselves in the on-going education system in the country. This is an issue which needs to be discussed with the community organisations responsible for the various schools.

If Oxfam wishes to introduce an alternative curriculum in some of the schools, such as Nai Roshni, for example, it has to offer a definite and viable alternative which requires research. If this is done, however, students should be given a choice as to whether they want to follow the standard curriculum or an alternative one.

6 The administrative arrangements for the education projects need reviewing. There are pros and cons with regard to both the arrangements - Oxfam-supervised

and partner-managed. However, when Gulzari is away from Quetta, schools are unable to procure materials, such as books, which are sometimes urgently needed. Moreover, Gulzari communicates indirectly with the women who run the schools by way of the male management of the project. The partner-managed approach means that Oxfam has relatively less power to institute change. It is recommended that a female education officer (part-time) be employed in Quetta to oversee the female education projects. Part of the education officer's task can include research on a curriculum for female literacy and health education.

7 In relation to the subject of repatriation, Afghan women expressed their fear of losing out on social services (no matter how inadequate) that are available to them in Pakistan. Whereas it is not possible to allay their fears, it is certainly possible to invest more in female education for both girls and women in Quetta. If the foundations are laid here and pilot projects tested, then the ground will be prepared for the future.

Enrollment of students at Khairabad School in 1991

Name of School	No of Classes	Total no of female students 1991	Total no of male students 1991	Female students as % of total
Khairabad	1	32	83	28%
	2	26	25	51%
	3	15	25	38%
	5	0	20	0%
		73	153	32%

Figure one

offers a comfortable few hours of shelter to some of the refugee women who live in extremely poor conditions in the nearby camps and a place where women of different ethnic groups can meet together and socialize.

The vocational training programme is focused on sewing skills and caters for a total of forty women for a maximum of four months, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon during weekdays. ISRA claims to receive at least two hundred applicants for each programme but preference is given to the 18 to 40 age group, particularly widows and female heads of the household. Although different ethnic minorities were represented amongst the participants, there were very few younger women and most of those present appeared to be in their early forties.

The 40 women are divided into four classes, in groups of ten and the course aims to teach them how to sew the traditional male and female Afghan garments. The first two weeks are spent on learning how to draft on the blackboard and thereafter, the next two weeks are spent on learining how to cut cloth and how to use the sewing machine. The second month is spent on learning how to sew garments for gents. The third month consists of a revision of the first four weeks, and in the final month the women acquire the practical skills of drafting, cutting and sewing female garments. With the exception of the Pakistani female course manager Zahida, the other three teachers are, Persian/Pushto-speaking Afghan women.

In addition to the training given in sewing, the course has a religious education component known as *Islammiyat.* This consists of what was described as the *Sunni fiqah-e masail*, and further broken down into *taharat, namaz, roza,* the six *kalima, wuzu, khane ki dua, sehri ki dua, iftari ki dua, khane ka tariqa, namaz ka tariqa*, *separa* etc. Whereas the *Islammiyat* lessons could easily be combined with basic literacy skills, it seems that this opportunity is missed due to the Sunni Wahhabi orientation of ISRA in general, and particularly the manager of the project, whose

attitude is very patronising. She sees her job as an 'evangelising' one - of teaching 'uncivilised' people how to become good Sunni Muslims so that they can be saved!

The health education component of the course comes from Handicap International which is, according to the booklet given to me by ISRA, essentially concerned with teaching individuals about different kinds of physical disabilities and how to deal with these on a day to day basis. Attempts to get in touch with the ISRA contact (Jamila) at Handicap International in order to ascertain the information given at ISRA were unsuccessful as she was away on annual leave. Furthermore, ISRA had just begun a new course with a fresh batch of students had not yet been able to organize anything prior to Jamila's return. It seems however, that the opportunity of introducing the women to a broad based, practical health education curriculum which addresses attitudes and behaviour, such as that devised and used by Dr. Seema in the Ariana adult literacy project, was being missed.

This project, that is, the vocational training, is quite popular with the women who receive a monthly stipend of two hundred Pak rupees a month for attending the course. In addition, all the participants are issued with certificates and are given free sewing machines plus a pair of scissors, machine oil and other maintanence accesories, as well as the two to four suits which they may have stitched during this period of time.

Other than employing one ex-student who lives in the refugee camp at Khairabad, as a tutor's assistant, ISRA does not exactly know what has happened to the other ex-students. There has been no attempt at keeping a record of ex-students or doing a follow-up in terms of the usefulness of the training. And this is in spite of the fact that they have already completed seven training programmes. It is unlikely that the women are able to earn a living from the skills they acquire if one takes into account the fact that they have no access to the market and that tailoring for a cash income is

a highly competitive and very male-dominated occupation in the informal sector in Pakistan. Furthermore, ISRA is flooding the market with tailors by producing forty more every four months!

It would not be wrong to assume therefore, that the project's implicit objective is to enable refugee women to sew clothes for their own families. If one was to be realistic, then the project fails even in achieving this unstated but implicit aim because most of the women trained at ISRA are unable to practice and re-inforce their sewing skills outside the bounds of the training centre. This is because of the sheer hardship under which the majority of refugees survive - a situation where buying cloth is an unaffordable luxury. It is also unlikely that the skills acquired at ISRA will be used when the refugees return home to the rural subsistence economy from which they are currently dislocated. The burden of a woman's day to day workload is unlikely to leave anytime in which sewing can be attended to.

Reports of women having sold off sewing machines in order to fulfil their immediate economic needs added to my scepticism of the project. According to hearsay, prior to ISRA, the refugee women were given expensive knitting machines by Majda, a Lebanese woman who had independently attempted to organise a women's income-generating project in the area. These were sold off since the women feared that having such expensive machines in their homes would be an open invitation to burglars to come and steal them!

Having criticised ISRA for imparting inappropriate skills, it must be remembered however, that setting up or funding an income-generating/training project for women who are totally segregated from the market economy (formal and informal) is a process fraught with difficulties, dilemmas and contradictions (for a discussion of these, see the report on A Feasibility Study of Women's Income Generating Projects). Besides it must not be forgotten that ISRA serves the important function of providing

refugee women with a comfortable, meeting place outside their isolated and difficult living conditions. In fact, to some community leaders, this social function appears to be quite radical and as a result the project has received threats in the past.

On the whole, is recommended that Oxfam should continue its support to the project and use the excuse of funding as some kind of leverage to ensure that the women can have the opportunity to acquire basic literacy skills and health education while they are at ISRA, preferably in a manner non-threatening to men. Experiment in International Living has devised an innovative way of teaching the alphabet through embroidery - thus combining embroidery and literacy classes. This is a clever strategy devised in an attempt to overcome male resistance to female education in the refugee camps. It is recommended that this method of teaching be explored further. With regard to health education, Dr Seema's adhoc textbook has the potential of providing a good source of information and is discussed elsewhere during the course of this report.

Also recommended is funding for a creche facility for the under five at ISRA which may enable more younger women in the 18 to 40 age group to come to the training centre.

It is also possible to use ISRA as a basis of an experimental/pilot income-generating project with a small group of women (about five) who have *khamak*-embroidery skills discussed in the feasibility report. It is strongly suggested that this possibility be explored with the help of Oxfam's newly appointed women's income-generating project officer in Islamabad.

Enrollment of students at Ariana Girls School in 1990 and 1991				
Name of School	No of Classes	Total no of students 1990	Total no of students 1991	Percentage increase
Ariana Girls	1 a/b/c	75	75	0%
	2	25	45	80%
	3	22	35	59%
	4	0	18	
	5	8	14	75%
		130	187	44%

Figure Two

Adult Education at Ariana Girl's School, Mariabad

Like ISRA, Ariana has the good fortune of being housed in a building which is in a very good condition in the locality of Mariabad. Ariana caters for women who are pre-dominantly of Shia persuasion and who appear to be refugees from the urban areas of Afghanistan. The school offers two literacy classes for female adults - an elementary and an intermediate level - both of which are well-attended by an average of 15-20 women. The course lasts through the academic year from March to December. The first level imparts basic reading and writing skills, whereas the second level reinforces these skills, teaches grammar and also includes a health education text written by Dr Seema.

The text books used for basic literacy skills are published by the education department of the interim government and are therefore heavily ideological. The two volumes are entitled *Sawad-i Jihadi* (*Literacy for the Holy War*) and most of the vocabulary and concepts used in the text are embedded in the recent historical experience of the civil war. The second volume starts off with a few pages in praise of the Mujahidin for example, and then to defines the meaning of the term Russian as follows: A Russian is he who is wild and bloodthirsty!

The literacy books are locked in this framework of ideological antagonism between the Mujahidin and the Russians and the content, unfortunately comes across as hateful political propaganda. Personally, I fail to see how such texts can inspire anyone to learn how to read and write.

On the other hand, the health education text in Persian which Dr Seema has ingeniuosly devised on her own, entitled *Komakhaye Awliya* (*First Aid*) is very relevant to women's needs. It offers practical advice about appropriate attitudes,

behaviour and responses in relation to very basic issues of health and nutrition, childcare and women's bodies in approximately forty-four A4 size pages.

Although the book is not formally organized or structured into sections, it is possible to trace a few major themes in it. The first eight pages or give advice on how to react in emergency situations outlined under the following headings:

- How to control temparature/fever
- When something is stuck in the throat
- How to control bleeding
- Things which must be kept out of childrens' reach
- Dealing with snake bites.

Thereafter the text offers eight pages on the importance of a nutritious diet for children, the benefits of breastfeeding, indigenous substitutes for milk, etc. The third identifiable theme tackles issues around cleanliness and hygiene in the home such as the hazards of spitting, allowing animals into the home, letting children play with livestock; the importance of airing the bedding and putting it out in the sun, etc. The fourth theme revolves around the benefit of keeping one's environment clean including water supplies. The book moves on to the health needs of infants and offers a step by step elementary guide to childcare. A few pages are then devoted to pregnancy and childbirth. From breastfeeding the book moves on to informing the reader about birth control and the various methods available with pros and cons.

Whereas the literacy classes at Ariana seem to be doing very well on the whole, there is a lot of room for improvement in terms of course materials and teaching methodology. Comments have already been made in relation to the ideological content of the course materials. Observation of the class in progress revealed that the teaching is structured in a conventional and rigid way where not much room exists for participation from the students.

Unlike ISRA, Ariana does have a proper creche facility which is unfortunately quite under utilized. The women maintained that although there is a full-time childminder, the children get bored as there are no toys or any other facilities available for children who are left at the creche.

Adult Education at the Nai Roshni School, Mariabad

It is important to note that unlike the above two projects, Nai Roshni is geared towards meeting the needs of non-refugees, that is, the local, bilingual female population of the Urdu/Persian speaking Hazara. Nai Roshni uses the premises of a school in the afternoons and it is run along the lines of a conventional Pakistani school with the standard national curriculum upto level six.

Nai Roshni seemed to be the only school where there was a confusion about the definition of the term 'adult'. Some of the older girls who attend the afternoon classes are those who have missed out on education in their earlier years and were embarrassed to attend government schools where they would be required to sit with girls a lot younger than them. Because these girls are past the age of puberty and are therefore considered to be adult, Nai Roshni is mistakenly perceived to be an adult education centre by the local community.

Many of the younger girls who attend the Nai Roshni school are those who work at the carpet centres in the mornings or help their mothers with housework and childcare. The headmistress reported that there were two adult women of age 21 and 28 in the school who set in with the 40 students in level two. These two adult women, however, were absent on both the occasions when I visited the school.

It seems obvious that no separate arrangements have been made for these two women to attend an adult literacy class as such but instead they were lumped together with children and girls. Part of the reason given for this state of affairs was the shortage of teachers. The school already has seven classes (including one KG) and has only six teachers. However, it seems that the potential for an adult literacy class is being missed here as well as in the Khairabad refugee camp, as outlined below, however, for different reasons.

The Lost Opportunity at Khairabad Camp, Satellite Town

Thirty five women who had attended adult literacy classes for two months last year, gathered together at Khairabad to request that arrangements be made for them to have a project like the one run by ISRA. Their literacy class was suspended because the school is short of one female teacher. The girls school at Khairabad has a level three class but has only two teachers which means that the teachers are already too stretched to offer anything to women.

The women were quite emphatic that they wanted to learn, but insisted that they be given a stipend - ISRA style. It was quite clear that the women in Khairabad perceived their economic needs as a priority and were expressing a need for an income-generating project rather than literacy skills or health education.

At the Brewery Road school, the teachers expressed an interest in starting an adult literacy class for women as well as men. It was pointed out that men find adult education for women threatening because many of the husbands are not literate. According to the teachers at the Brewery Road School, their main stumbling block was lack of resources, that is to say, funding.

WITH COMPLIMENTS

FROM

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ACBAR Resource & Information Centre

A REPORT SUBMITTED TO OXFAM, PAKISTAN BASED ON FIELDWORK IN QUETTA FROM 10 MARCH TO 3 APRIL, 1991

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